

## South King County Projects Update

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### South King County traffic closures this week

Most crews will stop work for the holidays at noon on Friday, Dec. 23 and resume on Tuesday, Jan. 3. However, crews on the I-5 – South 317<sup>th</sup> project will resume work on Tuesday, Dec. 27.

Also, please note that closures associated with paving are weather dependent and may be cancelled due to rain.

#### Interstate 5

- Expect daily closures of the left lane of southbound I-5 from Military Road to S. 320<sup>th</sup> Monday through Saturday from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. as crews build HOV ramps and lanes in the median. These closures are scheduled to continue through January.
- Expect nightly closures of the left lane of southbound I-5 from Military Road to S. 320<sup>th</sup> Monday through Thursday from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. for paving.
- Expect nightly closures of the left lane of northbound I-5 from S. 320<sup>th</sup> to Military Road Monday through Thursday from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. for paving.

#### State Route 161

- Expect weekday shoulder closures in both directions of SR 161 between S. 360<sup>th</sup> and Milton Way from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. as crews work to widen the highway.

### Year in review: I-5 – HOV Pierce to Tukwila: Stage 4

For the third feature in our December “Year in Review” series, we’ll focus on the [I-5 – HOV Pierce to Tukwila: Stage 4 Project](#). In this project, we’re widening I-5 between S. 320<sup>th</sup> and the Pierce County line and adding northbound and southbound HOV lanes for carpools, vanpools and buses.

Our contractor, ICON Materials, began construction on this project this past spring. In May we replaced 52 badly damaged concrete panels on southbound I-5 between SR 18 and the Pierce County line. We also started building four detention ponds and the connecting drainage system within the median – work that was completed in the fall.

Crews ground existing I-5 pavement to remove bumps and help tires grip the road surface better. Then we shifted traffic to provide room to work in the median. Crews cleared over 6,000 dump truck loads of material from the median. We built a 2500-foot-long retaining wall in the median at S. 375<sup>th</sup> and another 460-foot-long retaining wall at SR 161. These walls support the height difference between the northbound and southbound lanes. We also built columns and footings to support the widening of the I-5 bridges over S. 336<sup>th</sup> Street and SR 18. Crews have been performing electrical work throughout the project since construction began.

We completed asphalt paving at the Pierce County line, but we haven't been able to do much paving in the median this year due to poor weather. Next year will be a big year for laying down concrete pavement. We'll finish widening the I-5 bridges, and we'll open segments of the new HOV lane as we finish them. We'll also continue improvements to the existing I-5 pavement in the project area. We expect to complete this project in spring of 2007. This project is funded primarily by the 2003 gas tax ([Nickel funding](#)).

## **Last bridge girder set on SR 18 widening project**

On Dec. 7 contractor Atkinson Construction set the last bridge girder for the [SR 18 Maple Valley to Issaquah Hobart Road widening project](#). Crews set all the girders for three bridges in just three days. Workers celebrated the milestone by placing the traditional topping-out evergreen tree on one of the project's seven bridges over Taylor Creek.

Hoisting an evergreen tree on top of a structure to commemorate the occasion is part of an ironworker tradition that goes back centuries. However, there's no consensus on exactly where and when the tradition started, and what the evergreen tree symbolizes. The ceremony appears to have its roots in northern Europe a long time ago. Just how long ago is unknown.

Work on this project began in September 2003, and we expect to open all four lanes of the widened SR 18 in late summer 2006.

## **Highway advisory radio updates**

Tune your radio to 1520 AM to hear a new project update each week on I-5 in Federal Way. Questions or comments? E-mail [Laura Johnson](#).